

Dear Mr. Dowdy:

Thank you for your presentation before the Mississippi River Commission during the public meeting in Caruthersville, Missouri, on April 2, 2001. In your statement you discussed the following items: (a) annual funding for the St. Francis Basin project; (b) maintenance of Ditch 251 Upper; (c) erosion around a private bridge on Ditch 281; (d) continuation of channel maintenance work in your area and request for an investigation and surveys down-stream of the Arkansas/Missouri state line; and (e) opposition to alleged delay of projects by environmental groups.

The Commission recognizes your concerns regarding annual funding levels of the St. Francis Basin. We agree that the Memphis District's 5-year program is systematic in its approach and does identify substantial annual maintenance needs within the St. Francis Basin project. The Memphis District will continue to work this program and execute needed operation and maintenance based on available funding and relative priority of work.

The Memphis District is nearing completion on channel cleanout of Ditch 251 Upper. A modification is pending to place riprap protection at the intersection of Ditches 45 and 294 to prevent headcutting and erosion. Plans and specifications are completed on channel cleanouts of Ditches 66 and 251 Unimproved. Work on these two items will be scheduled dependent upon relative priority and availability of funds. Hydraulic analysis has been completed on Ditch 251 Lower, Ditch 1 Lower, Ditch 81, and Ditch 290. The results of that analysis indicate that the channel capacities need to be restored.

The Memphis District will inspect the possible scour at the bridge on Ditch 281-9 and make a determination if protection is warranted. The District staff will advise you of their findings.

The Memphis District is continuing to investigate the performance of the completed flood control improvements in the vicinity of Lower Belle Fountain and Stateline outlet ditches in southeast Missouri and northeast Arkansas as funding and other priorities permit. These investigations also include the effects of the Rivervale Floodway on drainage conditions in the area.

The Commission recognizes your concerns regarding alleged delays to projects and construction of particular items of work as a result of actions on the part of environmental agencies and interest groups. The Corps will continue to comply fully with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act in the development of projects with our local sponsors and engage resource agencies early on in the process to avoid delays to the extent possible.

Thank you again for your presentation. The Commission appreciates receiving your views and will be pleased to hear from you at our future public meetings.

Sincerely,

Edwin J. Arnold, Jr.
Brigadier General, U.S. Army
President Designee, Mississippi
River Commission